

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 SAB-01 ACDA-19

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FM USINT DAMASCUS

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION GENEVA

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BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY

SUBJECT: PRESS REVIEW - MARCH 24-30

1. SUMMARY: DAMASCUS PRESS (GOVERNMENT ORGAN AL-THAWRA AND BAATH PARTY ORGAN, AL-BAATH) GAVE MAJOR HEADLINE AND FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO CLASHES IN GOLAN. OTHER REPORTS INDICATE SARG CONTINUES TO PLAY ALL ITS OPTIONS ON DISENGAGEMENT WITH HARDLINE APPROACH FROM DEFENSE MINISTER AND NEGOTIATING LINE FROM FOREIGN MINISTER. BULLETIN COVERAGE WAS GIVEN TO SECRETARY'S MOSCOW TRIP. PRESS REPORTS ASAD WILL GO TO MOSCOW DURING APRIL. END SUMMARY.

2. FIGHTING ON THE GOLAN: ALL EDITIONS OF NEWS-PAPERS THIS WEEK CARRIED BANNER HEADLINES OF CONTINUED FIGHTING ON GOLAN IN OBVIOUS ATTEMPT KEEP TROUBLE THERE IN FOREFRONT OF NEWS. EDITIONS ON MARCH 27, POINTED OUT ARTILLERY BARRAGE ON THE 26TH WAS FIRST TO OCCUR THROUGHOUT NIGHT, AND SIMILARLY MARCH 28 ARTICLE DESCRIBED FIGHTING ON 27TH AS "LONGEST AND MOST VIOLENT CLASHES." ARTICLES CONTINUE TO CLAIM DIRECT HITS ON ISRAELI POSITIONS WITH SOME DESTRUCTION OF ISRAELI EQUIPMENT. PRESS MADE GREAT PLAY OF THE ISRAELI BOMBING MARCH 26 OF A RESTAURANT IN VILLAGE OF HARRA WHERE TWO CIVILIANS KILLED AND FOUR WOUNDED.

3. DISENGAGEMENT: SYRIAN OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO KEEP ALL OPTIONS OPEN. IN ADDITION TO THE FIGHTING (PARA 2) TLAS, MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND DEPUTY COMMANDER IN CHIEF, GAVE LECTURE TO RECOVER GOLAN JUST AS CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCED AND THAT ARMY NOW PREPARED DO WHATEVER NECESSARY. FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM SPOKE IN TUNIS TO ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL SAYING DISENGAGEMENT MUST BE FIRST STEP TOWARD TOTAL WITHDRAWAL. OTHER ESSENTIAL ELEMENT FOR PEACE, HE SAID, WAS "COMPLETE RECOGNITION OF RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE." VIRTUALLY SAME POINTS MADE BY SYRIA'S UNCLASSIFIED

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AMBASSADOR IN GENEVA, MOUAFFAK ALLAF, BEFORE THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE IN GENEVA. NEWSPAPERS REPORT DAYAN'S ARRIVAL IN WASHINGTON. ONE COMMENTARY WAS IN FORM OF REPRINT OF JUENE AFRIQUE ARTICLE ENTITLED, "IS IT TIME FOR ARABS TO TRUST US?" AND CONCLUDES, "NO."

4. U.S.: NEWSPAPERS HAVE CARRIED DAILY BULLETINS

ON SECRETARY'S TRIP TO MOSCOW. ITEMS REPORT TALKS INCLUDED MIDDLE EAST AND WERE IN SUM CONSTRUCTIVE, BUT NO OTHER DETAILS. MARCH 29 AL-BAATH CARRIED REPORT FROM WASHINGTON QUOTING PRESIDENT NIXON'S PRESS REMARKS THAT IT IS "ESSENTIAL TO WORK FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST." ON PERSONAL NOTE, AL-THAWRA HAS ITEM WITH PHOTOGRAPH THAT SECRETARY HAD GIVEN HIS "GIRL FRIEND, JILL ST. JOHN," AN ELEPHANT FROM SAIGON. IN OTHER U.S. COVERAGE: "NIXON AGREES TO GIVE TAPES TO HOUSE COMMITTEE," "AMERICAN GENERAL (GEN. GEOGE BATON (SP,)) SECRETLY VISITS SOUTH LEBANON," "SPACE CRAFT NEARS MERCURY (VOA REPORT)," "U.S. REBUFFS EFFORTS BY NORTH KOREA TO IMPROVE RELATIONS," AND "ABYSS GROWS BETWEEN EUROPE AND U.S.-- POMPIDOU WARNS AMERICA." ON LATTER SUBJECT THERE IS ARTICLE BY DR. GHASSAN RIFAT ON "THE CRISIS IN THE LIBERAL REGIMES" WHICH CALLS FOR "DECISIVE EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP AGAINST U.S. PRESSURE."

5. ISRAEL: SYRIAN PAPERS REPORT DEMONSTRATIONS BY ISRAELI MILITARY AGAINST THEIR COMMANDERS AND CALLS BY VARIOUS ISRAELI LEADERS FOR MEIR'S RESIGNATION. FRONT PAGE COVERAGE IS ALSO GIVEN TO ATTEMPTS BY ARABS TO RAISE PALESTINIAN FLAG ON WEST BANK IN MEMORY OF AL-KARAMA BATTLE.
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